

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-29 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 2 is canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of canceled claim 2. Claims 3, 5, 8, 12, 15, 17 and 19 are amended and claim 29 is added.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

I. Claim Objections

Claim 12 is objected to for an informality. As claim 12 is amended in reply to the objection, withdrawal of the objection to claim 12 is respectfully requested.

II. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-5, 7-10, 15-19, 21-23 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,021,181 to Miner et al. As claim 2 is canceled, the rejection of that claim is moot. The rejection of claims 1, 3-5, 7-10, 15-19, 21-23 and 26 is respectfully traversed.

Miner fails to disclose each and every feature recited in the rejected claims, as amended. For example, Miner fails to disclose a method of adjusting access rights of a caller, comprising receiving an interaction request from the caller at an interaction manager; retrieving selection criteria relating to the caller; determining access rights of the caller; determining if a token is associated with the caller; and adjusting at least one of the selection

criteria based on the token to control access to a callee; and providing the caller with access to the callee based on the selection criteria, as recited in amended claim 1.

Miner relates to computer-implemented voice messaging systems (col. 1, lines 5 and 6). The method features the steps of receiving a voice command from a first party, the voice command identifying a user-selectable one of a plurality of subscriber parties, and responding to the voice command by generating a greeting to the first party wherein the greeting is an audio recording in the voice of the identified subscriber (col. 1, line 66 – col. 2, line 9). The method is implemented by a computer-based electronic assistant. The assistant provides a user with an assistant which carries out the user's commands and helps the user perform tasks. In addition to this, the personal assistant supports a number of important functions, including a virtual intercom, a virtual refrigerator, and caller handoff (col. 6, lines 35-41). The virtual intercom allows a user to call out to another user at any point in time, and the assistant then interacts with the user in the voice of the target user—giving the feeling of having a conversation with the target user, not just the assistant (col. 6, lines 43-60).

The Office Action alleges that Miner discloses each and every feature recited in amended claim 1 at col. 11, line 37 – col. 12, line 7. However, the referenced section of Miner merely provides a sample dialog which illustrates the virtual intercom, the virtual refrigerator, and the threaded message features (col. 11, lines 20-23). The sample dialog is shown in Figs. 4A-4C of Miner, and in those figures, all speech generated by the assistant (e.g., played tokens and responses) is highlighted in bold and all speech of the caller is shown in regular type. In the messages that are generated by the assistant and played to the caller, the portions which are played back in the voice of the identified person are bracketed in quotes (col. 11, lines 25-32). Thus, Miner does not disclose providing the caller with access to the callee based on the selection criteria. Rather, Miner only discloses a caller having a dialog with a virtual intercom, exchanging messages with a virtual refrigerator, or interacting

with threaded message features, all of which are recorded. The threaded message features allow a user to use a voice activated command, such as "tell me more" to receive more information about the message (col. 7, lines 13-15). Thus, the caller is never given access to the callee based on selection criteria. Rather, Miner only discloses interaction with the virtual intercom gives the user "the feeling of having a conversation with the target user," or gives the user "a feeling of dealing directly with contacts, not just the assistant" (col. 6, lines 45-47, 50-59).

Regarding claims 5 and 19, Miner fails to disclose, wherein the interaction information includes at least two of visibility information, accessibility information, and continuity information. These terms are specifically defined in the specification and therefore their definition should apply to the pending claims. For example, visibility information is defined as information that informs the caller about the status or situation of a callee. Accessibility information is defined as information that provides the caller with a list of communication channels that the caller has decided to make available to the caller, and continuity information can contain information and action facilitation data that reflect the ongoing interaction between the caller and the callee (see page 5, lines 15-20 of the specification). As Miner merely relates to an electronic voicemail message handling system, Miner fails to disclose the additional feature recited in claims 5 and 19.

Regarding claims 8 and 22, Minor fails to disclose, presenting the interaction information of claim 5 to the caller as an interaction space. The Office Action alleges such features are disclosed in Miner at col. 1, lines 46-57. Minor merely discloses that electronic assistants are known to interact with pagers PDAs, and the like. However, being able to communicate with such devices does not anticipate presenting interaction information that includes at least two of visibility information, accessibility information and continuity information being as an interaction space to the caller. Similarly, regarding claims 9 and 23,

the mere ability to communicate with a web-enabled device does not anticipate displaying the interaction space comprising at least two of visibility information, accessibility information and continuity information on a web-enabled device. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-5, 7-10, 15-19, 21-23 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is respectfully requested.

III. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 6, 11, 12, 20, 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Miner in view of U.S. Patent 6,360,254 to Linden et al.; claims 13, 14, 27 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Miner in view of U.S. Patent 6,715,082 to Chang et al. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

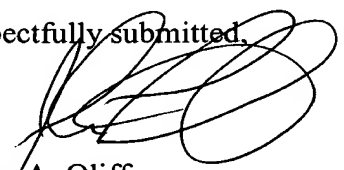
None of the applied references, whether considered alone or in combination, disclose or suggest each and every feature recited in the rejected claims. Furthermore, each of claims 6, 11-14, 20, 24, 25, 27 and 28 are allowable for their dependency on their respective base claims, as well as for the additional features recited therein. Furthermore, as none of Linden or Chang overcome the deficiencies of Miner discussed above, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 6, 11-14, 24, 25, 27 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1 and 3-29 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

John W. Fitzpatrick
Registration No. 41,018

JAO:JWF/ldg

Date: May 10, 2005

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
